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Secular Humanists Have Little Power At The Polling Place

Although some religious leaders view "secular humanists" as a threat to our society, a 1988 Gallup Organization study conducted for the Times Mirror, shows that only 9% of the American electorate were classified as "seculars."

Unlike all other registered voters they are by far the least likely to say they have never doubted the existence of God (33%), to believe that even today miracles are performed by the power of God (10%), or to view prayer as an important part of their daily lives (10%).

These results were obtained through an extensive multi-variate study of the American electorate that was based upon interviews with 4,244 registered voters. Gallup grouped them according to the values that underlie their political attitudes; and went beyond party labels to identify the groups that make up the "real electorate."

Surprising to many may be the findings that the power of God, miracles and prayer are important influences for nine of the 10 groups in defining their political attitudes.

Further information concerning how these groups are defined and their characteristics can be obtained by calling the Times Mirror at (213) 237-3946.

Impact of Religion on Political Beliefs

Group/% of registered voters	I never doubt the existence of God	Even today miracles are performed by the power of God	Prayer is an important part of my daily life
Republicans			
Enterprisers/12% (pro-business, anti-government)	93%	86%	79%
Moralists/12% (pro-school prayer, anti-abortion)	94	88	88
Independents			
Upbeats/10% (young, optimistic, patriotic)	97	87	75
Disaffecteds/10% (pessimistic, alienated)	81	77	78
Followers/7% (young, politically apathetic)	90	90	81
Seculars/9% (non-religious, pro-tolerance)	33	10	10
Democrats			
'60s Democrats/10% (non-militant, pro-government)	95	90	83
New Dealers/14% (pro-government and unions)	99	93	90
Partisan Poor (militantly Democratic, pro-social spending)	96	96	92
Passive Poor/7% (pro-social spending, anti-communist)	99	95	92

Billy Graham Named to List of Most Admired Men for 32nd Time

Evangelist Billy Graham has been the most durable figure in 40 years of polling by The Gallup Organization, having been named 32 times by the nation's adults as one of the 10 men they admire the most. His presence on the top-10 lists has been so consistent over the last forty years, that when the polls are all tallied together, he stands at the head of the list of the men the American public has admired the most over the past four decades.

In the most recent poll, taken at the end of 1989, President George Bush placed first, Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev was second, and former President Ronald Reagan was third in popularity. Pope John Paul II is fourth on the most-admired list and Billy Graham currently is fifth. Rounding out the top 10 are Poland's Lech Walesa, businessmen Donald Trump and Lee Iacocca, and the Reverend Jesse Jackson. Former President Jimmy Carter and entertainer Bill Cosby are tied for the tenth position.

The 1980s were led by Ronald Reagan, who places first for the decade when the polls for all 10 years are combined, but the remainder of the top of the list is dominated by religious figures. Pope John Paul II was second for the decade, Billy Graham was third, the Reverend Jesse Jackson fourth, and born-again former President Carter was fifth.

Billy Graham is the only non-president to be first for a decade, having won that honor in the turbulent 1970s that some historians have characterized as an era of "failed presidencies." Richard Nixon was only second in the aftermath of Watergate, Edward Kennedy was third, Henry Kissinger was fourth, while former presidents Carter and Ford tied for the fifth position. Pope John Paul II was in ninth place.

Dwight Eisenhower led the 1960's, Lyndon Johnson was second, and Billy Graham was third on the list of most admired men. Also appearing during that decade were humanitarian Albert Schweitzer in seventh place, and Pope Paul VI who tied for eighth-place honors with John Kennedy, who lived for too short a period during those years to have gained a higher position.

Eisenhower also led the 1950s, followed by Winston Churchill, Harry Truman, and Douglas McArthur. Albert Schweitzer was fifth during the decade, and Pope Pius XII was seventh. Bishop Fulton Sheen, who gained wide television audiences and could be said to be the first "TV evangelist," was tied with Herbert Hoover for eighth place. Billy Graham made his first appearance on the top-10 lists by placing tenth.

Most Admired Men — 1989

(Choices of adults)

1. George Bush
2. Mikhail Gorbachev
3. Ronald Reagan
4. Pope John Paul II
5. Billy Graham
6. Lech Walesa
7. Donald Trump
8. Lee Iacocca
9. Jesse Jackson
10. Jimmy Carter, Bill Cosby]tie

(Choices of teen-agers)

1. George Bush
2. Jesse Jackson
3. Ronald Reagan
4. Michael Jordan
5. Donald Trump
6. Mikhail Gorbachev
7. Bill Cosby
8. Eddie Murphy
9. Patrick Swayzee
10. Bon Jovi

When the poll results for the past 40 years are combined, Billy Graham is at the head of the list. Dwight Eisenhower is second, Winston Churchill is third, and Ronald Reagan is fourth. Pope John Paul II, whose reign has now spanned two decades, ranks fifth. Completing the list are Edward Kennedy, Richard Nixon, Harry Truman, Jimmy Carter, and Douglas McArthur.

Certainly Billy Graham's longevity on the list has contributed greatly to his first-place showing for the past 40 years, but in addition to being at the peak of his productive life during the survey period, he has had a consistently positive image when others such as Richard Nixon and Edward Kennedy, who have also figured prominently during the era, have suffered from incidents that have been damaging to their reputations. The Reverend Graham's record would be no match for the combined votes of the incumbent presidents over the 40-year span, but he would still outrank the combined standings of the reigning popes of the era.

"Billy Graham made his first appearance on the top-10 lists in the 1950's"

. . . But Teens Disagree

Despite the prominence of religious figures on the most-admired lists named by adults, America's teen-agers more often choose secular figures instead. Billy Graham, for example, has never appeared on the top-10 lists of men that have been compiled by The Gallup Youth Survey. Pope John Paul II, who previously was often ranked prominently on their lists, placed only tenth in 1988, and for the first time failed to make the top 10 in 1989.

The current teen list is headed by George Bush, who is followed by Jesse Jackson in second place, and by Ronald Reagan in third. The remainder of the list is decidedly secular in its composition, consisting of Chicago basketball player Michael Jordan, Donald Trump, Mikhail Gorbachev, Bill Cosby, Eddie Murphy, Patrick Swayzee, and rock star Bon Jovi.

Entertainers, however, make a poorer showing when the teen choices for the entire 1980s decade are combined. Ronald Reagan ranks first on the most admired list for the 1980s. Jesse Jackson is second and Pope John Paul II is third. In the middle positions for honors for the decade are Jimmy Carter in fourth place, George Bush in fifth, and Gerald Ford who is sixth. The only figures from the entertainment world who drew sufficiently sustained mention from the teens to make the list are Michael Jordan and Burt Reynolds who tied for seventh place. Mikhail Gorbachev ranks ninth on the teen 1980s list, and Edward Kennedy is tenth.

As we enter the 1990s, it remains to be seen if religious figures will rise to fill the current vacuum of religious role models from whom America's youth may wish to draw inspiration and emulate.

The lists were compiled by asking respondents to volunteer names of their first and second choices of men they most admire. Accordingly, people who receive extensive media exposure during the survey period tend to dominate the selections for any given year. The questions are asked as follows:

What man that you have heard or read about, living today in any part of the world, do you admire the most? And who is your second choice?

The findings for any given year reflect the combined first and second-place votes. The overall findings and findings for individual decades were derived by scoring and ranking the findings for each year; i.e., a first-place vote received 10 points, a second-place vote 9 points, third-place 8 points . . . tenth-place 1 point.

Results for adults are based upon surveys each year since 1950 conducted by The Gallup Poll in person or by telephone among nationwide samples of 1,000 to 1,500 adults, age 18 and older. For results based on this size, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects could be 3 to 4 percentage points in either direction. The results for teen-agers are based upon telephone surveys each year since 1980 conducted by The Gallup Youth Survey among representative national cross sections of 500 or more young men and women, ages 13 through 17. The error attributable to sampling and other random effects could be 4 percentage points in either direction.

"As we enter the 1990s, it remains to be seen if religious figures will rise to fill the current vacuum of religious role models for America's youth . . ."

Most Admired Men

1980s

1. Ronald Reagan
2. Pope John-Paul II
3. Billy Graham
4. Jesse Jackson
5. Jimmy Carter
6. Edward Kennedy
7. Lee Iacocca
8. George Bush
9. Mikhail Gorbachev
10. Lech Walesa

1970s

1. Billy Graham
2. Richard Nixon
3. Edward Kennedy
4. Henry Kissinger
5. Jimmy Carter]tie
   Gerald Ford
7. Anwar Sadat
8. Ronald Reagan
9. Pope John-Paul II
10. George Wallace

1960s

1. Dwight Eisenhower
2. Lyndon Johnson
3. Billy Graham
4. Winston Churchill
5. Richard Nixon
6. Robert Kennedy
7. Albert Schweitzer
8. John Kennedy]tie
   Pope Paul VI
10. Harry Truman

1950s

1. Dwight Eisenhower
2. Winston Churchill
3. Harry Truman]tie
   Douglas MacArthur
5. Albert Schweizer
6. Adlai Stevenson
7. Pope Pius XII
8. Herbert Hoover]tie
   Fulton Sheen
10. Billy Graham

Many Believe, But Few Use Occult Mediums

New York — In a CBS Poll, two adults in three (64%) say they believe in psychic phenomena such as ESP or telepathy or other experiences that cannot be explained by normal means. Belief rises to three persons in four (78%) among those who are ages 18 to 44 and have attended college.

One person in four (25%) reports he has personally experienced such a phenomenon. Young college-educated women (35%) are the most likely to believe they have had contact with the paranormal world, compared to only 23% of their male counterparts.

Despite this high level of belief and claimed experience, only one person in 10 (10%) reports having ever consulted an astrologer, medium, tarot card reader, or a psychic. Only 1% of the adults interviewed say they consult an intermediary of the paranormal on a regular basis. For most people, use of occult intermediaries has been made only once or twice.

The poll was conducted among a nationwide random sample of 984 adults interviewed by telephone December 5-8, 1989. The error due to sampling could be plus or minus three percentage points for a sample of this size.

Believe in psychic phenomena	64%
Had psychic experience	25
Ever consulted medium	10
Consult regularly	1

From our readers . . .

Cults on campus

I was pleased to see that **Emerging Trends** [December 1989, 11:12] reported on a survey of college students' assessment of the likelihood of their joining a cult. This is a difficult topic to study through surveys and I applaud PRRC's work. I wish, however, that the lead lines of the article had not downplayed the danger to college students.

First, the essence of cultic conversions is deception, so few recruits would be expected to view themselves as likely to join — just as few people would consider themselves likely to be fooled by a con man.

Second, even if the actual frequency of joining were 2% (which may very well be the case), this relatively low figure is not something to celebrate. Nobody has claimed that cults involve a large minority of the population. But they can devastate many whom they affect, not to mention their families.

Third, the relatively high interest in New Age programs among the better students is cause for alarm. Although the New Age Movement is in essence a competing world view and not a cult, many adherents of this world view are susceptible to the enticements of New Age cults, of which there appear to be a growing number.

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Announcing . . .

Religion in America 1990

Religion In America 1990 will highlight trends in religious beliefs and practices, as well as the public's views on the impact of religion on society. Many of these indicators have become basic and standard measurements of the state of organized religion in the U.S.

The report will also present a detailed analysis of church attendance and membership by key population groups and by major faiths and denominations. Because no other organization regularly measures America's churchgoing habits, The Gallup Poll has lent its fact-finding service for this purpose.

Also included will be demographic profiles of the major faiths and denominations, as well as trends in religious preference and identification.

A special commentary by George Gallup, Jr. will explore the implications of recent survey findings for America's churches, as we move into the final decade of the 20th century.

The cost per copy is only $30.00, plus $2.00 for postage and handling. Make checks payable to Princeton Religion Research Center, P.O.Box 389, Princeton, New Jersey 08542.

Seven In 10 Claim Church Membership

A resurgence in the 1990s?

Seven adults in 10 (69%) claimed membership in a church or synagogue during 1989. This marks a very modest increase in membership for the 1980s decade in which membership was at an average of 68%. Membership during the decade peaked at 71% in 1985, but dropped to 65% in 1988. The 1988 membership figures are the all-time low since the question was first asked by Gallup in 1937. It is conceivable that the church scandals that year may have had an adverse impact upon membership, but if this is the case it is reassuring to note that membership quickly rebounded to previous levels for the period.

Prior to the late 1970s, membership was always reported by 70% or more of the U.S. adult population. It was an average 73% in the 1930s and peaked at an average of 74% during the 1940s, including a record high membership count of 76% in 1947. Average attendance dropped one percentage point during the 1950s and 60s era to 73 percent. During the 1970s, a greater fall in membership occurred when the average was reduced to 70%.

Decline of the West

Only a bare majority of adults (56%) in the western region of the country claim membership in a church or synagogue. By comparison, 72% who live in the remaining regions of the U.S. say they are members.

In line with attendance figures, membership increases according to age. Lowest membership is found among those who are 18 to 29 years of age (61%). Affiliation increases to two adults in three among those who are ages 30 to 49 (68%), and to three in four among those 50 and older (76%). The "baby boomers" who swelled the U.S. population's proportion of young adults during the 1970s and 1980s may have had an adverse impact on overall membership and attendance simply because of their age. As the life cycle continues and we enter the period that forecasters have called the "greying of America," church membership and attendance may be boosted as the ranks of the young grow thinner, while those who are middle-age and older become the dominant elements of the U.S. population.

Women outnumber men as members, by a margin of 69% to 64%. The affluent (74%) are more likely than those with below-average incomes (66%) to report formal affiliation with a church or synagogue. Non-whites (72%) are slightly more likely than whites (69%) to be members. No significant difference in membership status is noted according to educational background.

Measures of membership are determined by response to the question:

Do you happen to be a member of a church or synagogue?

Such reports are self-classifications, and may include some who are not currently on the rolls of their local church or synagogue. It should also be borne in mind that some churches consider people to be members at birth and such distinctions may not always be self-reported.

The audits from 1955 through 1989 were based on an average of several surveys each year. Prior to 1955 they were based on single annual surveys. The 1989 data are based on telephone interviews with a randomly selected national sample of 2,457 adults, 18 and older. For results based on samples of this size, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects could be plus or minus 3 percentage points.

CHURCH/SYNAGOGUE MEMBERSHIP

1989	69%
1988	65
1987	69
1986	69
1985	71
1984	68
1983	69
1982	67
1981	68
1980	69
1970s	70
1960s	73
1950s	73
1940s	74
1930s	73

CHURCH MEMBER PROFILE – 1989

	Members
Total	69%
Sex	
Male	64
Female	69
Age	
18-29	61
30-49	68
50+	76
Race	
White	69
Non-white	72
Education	
College	68
High school	70
Non-High school	69
Income	
$50,000+	74
$30,000-$49,999	70
$20,000-$29,999	68
Under $20,000	66
Region	
East	70
Midwest	72
South	74
West	56

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Available from The George H. Gallup International Institute . . .

AMERICA'S YOUTH 1977-1988

The late Dr. George Gallup believed the proper study of youth was the key to understanding the future of our country and its institutions.

Thirteen years ago he created The Gallup Youth Survey to track important trends and shifts in teen-age beliefs, behavior and attitudes. The survey he founded now represents the oldest continuous measurement of teens' thinking.

The first 12 years of this valuable research have been compiled for the first time into a 312-page reference book. Values, religion, ethics, education, careers, heroes and role models, causes and issues, substance use and abuse, service, crime and violence are just some of the topics included in the 21-chapter volume.

This special report has proved to be a valuable resource for youth leaders, educators, youth ministers, social workers, and others whose work with young people requires an understanding of their attitudes and behavior.

Orders may be sent to The George H. Gallup International Institute, 100 Palmer Square, P.O. Box 140, Princeton, N.J. 08542. The price is $99, but for orders pre-paid by check, money order or credit card the cost is only $89, including postage and handling. Telephone: (609) 921-6200 or FAX (609) 924-0228.

EMERGING TRENDS is published monthly except July and August by the PRINCETON RELIGION RESEARCH CENTER. The Center, founded in 1977, is an inter-faith non-denominational research organization with headquarters in Princeton, New Jersey. The PRRC specializes in creative actionable research, utilizing the worldwide attitudinal and behavioral facilities of Gallup International. The purpose of the PRRC is to gain a better understanding of the nature and depth of religious commitment in the U.S. and abroad and to explore ways this information can enable religious leaders to promote spiritual growth. A one-year subscription can be obtained for $35.00. Inquire: **Publications Department, P.O. Box 389, 100 Palmer Square, Princeton, New Jersey 08542 (Telephone 609/921-8220) PLEASE NOTIFY US OF ADDRESS CHANGE.**

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